THE

FREE LANCE

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THE FREE LANCE

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EDITOR'S NOTE —

The following article and poem are presented as an anniversary memorial to Paul Laurence Dunbar. Out of a dozen or more writers queried, these represent the only replies, so our plans for a Dunbar Memorial Issue were abandoned. However, we feel that the continued existence of The Free Lance and the vigour in its pages constitutes a living memorial to Dunbar and all our honored dead.

MUTUAL APPRECIATION: DUNBAR AND CABLE

Harriet Monroe was the official poet laureate for Chicago's Columbian Exposition, but she did not have the field all to herself. Young Paul Laurence Dunbar also composed a poem in honor of the World's Fair, 'A Columbian Ode,' just a few months before his first book, *Oak and Ivy*, appeared in December, 1892. Attracted by the Fair, he spent the following summer in Chicago.

In July, Dunbar listened to the speakers at the Fair's Literary Congress, among them Richard Watson Gilder, editor of *Century Magazine*, Charles Dudley Warner, Hamlin Garland, and George W. Cable, who was then at the height of his fame as a recorder of old Creole days in Louisiana and a champion of civil rights for the Negro. Dunbar would have found inspiration in Cable's fine rendering of the varied dialects of New Orleans and its environs in his fiction and in the courageous logic of his essays pleading for Negro rights. Surely the expatriate southern author would have been in sympathy with the sentiments expressed in 'The Colored Americans,' the poem he recited at the Fair late in August, and would have considered him to be exactly the kind of aspiring citizen whom he hoped to save from the burdens of segregation.

Two years later, when Cable came to Dayton to read from *The Grandissimes*, he mentioned at a tea that Richard Watson Gilder wished to publish the work of a Negro writer in *Century* Magazine. Mrs Charlotte Reeve Conover showed Cable the April issue, which included Dunbar's 'A Negro Love Song.' When the surprised visitor learned that Dunbar was a serious poet of pure African descent who lived in Dayton, he asked to

meet him. On the night of Cable's reading, Dunbar could see from his gallery seat that the bearded author sitting on the platform was thumbing through a little brown book — *Oak and Ivy*. Mrs Conover introduced the two men backstage after the program, and they spent an hour in conversation about books and authors and social problems.

Dunbar and Cable met again, this time in New York in the summer of 1896, after William Dean Howells' review of *Majors and Minors* had brought fame to the Ohio poet. At that time Cable was editing *The Letter*, a house organ for his Home Culture Clubs which he planned to expand into a general magazine. He solicited manuscripts from several writers whom he had aided earlier in their attempts to break into print, and he must have asked Dunbar for a contribution. This poem was published in the August issue :

THEOLOGY BY INTUITION

There is a Heaven! For ever, day by day,
The yearning of my soul doth tell me so.
There is a hell I'm quite as sure, for, pray,
If there were not where would my enemies go?

In the version which appeared in *Lyrics of the Hearthside* (1899), the poet changed the title to ' Theology ' and substituted ' upward longing ' for yearning and ' neighbors ' for ' enemies '.

Dunbar must have released these lines to Cable's obscure little magazine partly in gratitude for the white novelist's kindly interest in his career ; no doubt he could have placed the poem elsewhere more profitably. Its appearance in *The Letter* seems an appropriate symbol of the mutual appreciation of two significant American authors.

— Philip Butcher

AT THE HOME OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR, DAYTON, OHIO

The time-thinned suits,
the slender shoes,
the glass encased books lay open to us,
his fellow poets;
we stood enshrined
in his bedroom, almost heard
the saw-edged cough, the soft blood
oozing hollow meters.
O where has the song bird flown?
Melindy sang sweetly in the twilight
and lazy 'Lias finally arose to listen
in de mawnin'
A banjo plunked its heart out to the beat
of dancing feet, and the yellow taters
roasted next to golden corn pone;
the fiddle scraped and shrilled to thumping claps,
and oh, the rolling laughter.

Now the notes stick in the throat,
the dancers drift into eternal mist;
the boy who once lived in a box house,
lies in one, softly
his tapered fingers intertwined, a
silent tattoo
to our weeping.

— Helen Johnson Collins

ELEGY
ON THE DEATH OF EMMETT TILL

I mourn this silence
I mourn this dark boy's silence smothering
speech forever.
mourning, I ask, where are our shouts
in a land whose myth of darkness hovers frightful
reality in a time of acquiescence; where, where
is the sound
where is anger of wilful words smouldering
in throat's strangulation?
I mourn
because I would not kill, knowing killing is suffering
a snarling, extinctual end; and I mourn
that something weak, nameless — inside me — allows
this lie of color life in my blood and bone.
I mourn that I have closed eye, mind, mouth
allowing miles of tarnished silence to barricade
me from my brothers gagging hate.
and I call, call to those outside me
to not forget a boy, and I call to you that ask yourselves
has this boy died
only a symbol of gigantic wrongs unredressed?
I mourn
for a dark boy, always silence,
— a silence unhinging memory —
I mourn
as I mourn for our land in darkness,
and I cry for those giving man pain and pain
and pain;
but I mourn, in a time spilling darkness,
sickness in tomorrow,
I pity those diseased in mind,
those sick in private darkness
and I mourn the lonely man, living this thunder,
the lonely man
searching wreckages of human grief for splinters
of dawn
in a scarred night of sorrow.

— Harland Ristau

WEARY BLUES

The theme rolls its hot grief through the years
o shake, my mountains, mutter, my streams.
The pillar sinks in ecstasy through night's flesh.
O weep, my songs, listen to my red blood.

The sycamore winnows its dry fragrance
heavily into my heart
o gather memories for me to live by —
twelve blue measures for my life:
send me send me send me deep, o my god
send me deep down to the brink of the flood
o burst, my soul, open your deep deep.

Sadness — you kiss the strayed sisters of ecstasy
o fields let fall their gray, cotton for my thirst.
Create here all harmonies, I'll play them
o red javelin through the bell's distracted song.

The night knows my themes, I give them to you
with fire
for the burning in your blood:
send me send me send me high, o my god
send me high up to the sun's rim
o burst, my soul, open your lofty sphere.

— Stig Carlson

(translated from the Swedish by Grace Hunter)

COCKFIGHT

In the dirt pit
of a tight Domingo crowd
proud lean colors
stalk and feint

they merge in slow turn
of a crepe-papered windmill
flapping loose ends

or fire plumed spirals
swirled from a rocket
mix glint of gaffles
in a muffled blur

the steel parried clash
splashing swiped red
from scream curls
hurled to the mob

the mob electric
bowstring tensed
drawn glass eager
in ebon eyed pitch

awaiting relief
in a feathered fall
the sigh
of broken fevers.

— E. W. Northnagel

THE ELM STREET PLACE

by R. P. A.

1

Klopstock Realty was in a small corner of a building devoted to what seemed important enterprises (not inclusive of Klopstock Realty as to the matter of importance). Inside Klopstock Realty there was Mr Klopstock, a small man sitting at a small desk with very small principles according to many people. To add small to small, he did but small business.

Rumor had it that Klopstock Realty stood on its last leg financially. Rumor went further : Klopstock Realty didn't have even a last leg to stand on. Facts showed, such facts as were shown ever, that Klopstock Realty was desperate in business in a way that the bankrupt are. One discovered that ' business ' was Mr Klopstock's name for any old treachery he could devise, the present one being that he had managed to procure the signature of my friends, The Mackeys, on some Klopstockian paper. They, The Mackeys, were sorely afraid that the legality of the paper would become dangerous Klopstock.

' Now,' I said, ' you would prefer something else? You signed, did you, under premises that you did not understand?'

This being the case, it threatened to be authentic Klopstock and would bear changing the mind of Mr Klopstock.

' If Klopstock's selling, say, personal possessions, would he like cash?' (I could have said The Mackeys seemed a risk.)

' It's a matter of at least a year. More, perhaps,' The Mackeys said. ' We're figuring on loans also.'

I told The Mackeys I would help. I would scan for a house to buy.

2

Mr Klopstock's aspect? Up-in-age look, nose of extreme gravity, and a smiled mouth like an artery, but nothing humorous in it.

He leaned forward indulgently. He was like a man who would sell you the world if he thought you gullible enough. He acted like a man terribly anxious to be of service ; terribly anxious to be fair. One thing certain ; he was terribly anxious.

' This gentleman,' said Mr Klopstock, referring to me, ' is looking for a house, Bretford. Have we anything for him?'

Mr Klopstock was asking whom? Not Mr Bretford? You would seem more likely to have told Mr Bretford. Bretford, Mr Klopstock's assistant, seemingly having waited patiently for who knows how long to be asked anything even half significant, eagerly proffered his opinion, of which Mr Klopstock took about as much notice as you would a maniac analysing the stock market.

'Have we, Bretford? I think we have. I think we have. Let's see.'

He opened a book that had the features of profound statistics.

'We do have, I'm sure,' said Mr Bretford with everything but authentic surety, 'we do have. I know we do have. I'd say the Earrington Place, Mr Klopstock. I'd say — '

'Business, of course,' said Mr Klopstock to me, unconcerned with what Mr Bretford would say, 'business demands that I ask you a few pertinent questions.'

Pertinent questions? Yes: Would I make payments or pay cash? I would pay cash. I did say cash?

Mr Klopstock's pen stopped.

'Oh cash?' said Mr Klopstock. 'Bretford, this gentleman's record will go in our files for cash settlements.' (I supposed then that you were all settled when in those files.) 'Bretford! — on Summerington — the Holdsby Place! That, sir, is a house you cannot fail to buy. Isn't it, Bretford? Isn't the Holdsby Place the place?'

'Mr Klopstock's right, sir. The Holdsby house is the place.'

I said, 'I can understand how the Holdsby Place can be the place of a good deal. However, I want something out Broadlake way. In fact, I wouldn't buy elsewhere but out Broadlake way.'

The Mackeys had informed me that the house owned by Klopstock Realty out Broadlake way was the Elm Street Place. Concerning the Elm Street Place, this had been the transaction with The Mackeys.

'Broadlake!' said Mr Klopstock in what seemed shock. 'Did you hear that, Bretford? Broadlake!'

Bretford had heard that. 'And to think, Mr Klopstock, only yesterday — '

'Cash, you say?' said Mr Klopstock, contemplating grimly. 'Cash?'

'Cash,' I repeated.

'I shall have to make arrangements. Bretford, bring out

what we have on the Elm Street Place.'

'The Elm Street Place?' asked Bretford. 'But didn't the — ?'

'Bretford,' said Mr Klopstock, suddenly more terse, 'the Elm Street Place files, please!'

The Elm Street Place 'brought out' so to speak (it should never have been 'out' anywhere at all), Mr Klopstock mused and ruffled the papers, looked at the ceiling, at a calendar, at his desk, in his desk, and performed just admirably, I'd say, not to have been making the intended impression, since I knew the man had already procured The Mackeys' signature, deceptively, for the Elm Street Place.

'I think,' he said, rubbing his forefinger over his lips, 'I think I can see my way.'

He did not know that I could see it as well — his 'way' — very Klopstockian, this 'way'.

'You can see that?' I said. 'Your way, I mean? Then good!'

'Yes, I can see it clearly. Bretford, I think we can see our way in this matter.'

Now it was Bretford's 'way' also, and Bretford, not having a 'way', was glad to have a 'way' given him to see.

'You can see it, Mr Klopstock? Then shall I take the gentleman to have a look?'

'Do so, Bretford.'

3

Bretford, once removed from the authority of Mr Klopstock, substituted authority of his own, which was second-hand Klopstock.

'Mr Klopstock's busy as busy,' Bretford began. 'And so many cash sales! Klopstock Realty has the real Realty. Mr Klopstock's the man to deal with.'

'He is,' I said, 'a man to be dealt with, Mr Klopstock is.'

The Elm Street Place was on a corner, and denotative of Elms there was a dead tree, if you were determined about Elms.

'Here she is!' said Bretford as we came too close to 'her' for any good ('she' being the endearing term that I deplored).

'So this is the Elm Street Place?' I said (with enthusiasm, of course, since I had to be sufficiently impressed).

'This is the Elm Street Place,' said Bretford. 'This is it!'

Now let me as briefly and as fairly as possible give some idea of the Elm Street Place. Any dreadful idea would do. In fact, it seemed that whatever brought it into being had no idea at all, or else those derivative of a view of the metropolitan junkyards; a cross-section of bombed-out Berlin all doing too much justice to the Elm Street Place. A rain-splotched, weather-wracked collision of wooden jargon the equal of which would be difficult to find unless, say, something stood from the time of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. It was the worst of a bad group in a run-down slice of the city and which Klopstock thought nothing of proffering with the appalling temerity of his exorbitant rates and trumpery about files for cash settlements, even to an ingenious deposit slip for 'holding' temporary priority which he would advance as binding in contract upon unsuspecting gullibles.

Providing that I can presume upon the popular notion of the roofs of houses, we will say that the Elm Street Place made a porous effort in that capacity. Porch? Laughingly, yes. You would, however, have to go far to say that the Elm Street Place had responsible porch steps. There were some hollow aspirants for that function wholly without scruples. Doors? The entrance, you may mean? You could not really mean anything as mean. Windows? Let us see more.

'Now here is your yard space. Unparalleled! You look to all two corners of Elm Street,' said Mr Bretford.

'And, of course,' I said, 'these two corners of Elm Street ought to be looked to.'

Bretford again, 'Elm Street is Elm Street. Nothing can touch it for all around convenience.'

We were about to enter the house. Bretford, continuing, 'This house has the best in it. Built when they were really using the best in houses. The best of oak. Hardwoods, you know? Extremely hard woods. The kind that resists nails, you know.'

'That,' I said, 'accounts for the inclined feeling one gets on this wonderful porch. Nails resistance.'

'Mr Klopstock'll have this porch fixed up. Let's see the inside. This is a house to be reckoned with, take it from me.'

I'd gladly have taken it from him and wrecked it.

We entered a house the character of which is described readily by the term 'debris'.

'Very interesting,' I said. 'I don't suppose I need ask

whether one is still being conveniently treated to a view of Elm Street, say, for instance, through the wall here?'

'Mr Klopstock's intention was to tear out this wall,' said Bretford.

'Did he?'

'No, not exactly. However we include that in a discount on the price.'

'Generously, then, that does justice to one, doesn't it?'

'Now here, you see, the hallway leads conveniently off into the sitting room.'

'You could go off in this sitting room conveniently.'

'In fact,' continued Mr Bretford, 'the whole house is an amazing masterpiece of construction when you think of it, let's say, as Frank Lloyd Wright must think of a house. You know — the architect? Now here is something most houses lack; a way to get into the cellar right out of the living room. This is master designing.'

'Somebody, indeed, had a designing mind. I suppose this is the dining room? I might ask what that scampering sound is?'

'I can't imagine. Neighbors very likely.'

4

'Bretford,' said Mr. Klopstock, on our return to the office, 'I hope you made clear all the advantages of the purchase?'

'I made clear all the advantages of the purchase, Mr Klopstock. This gentleman will tell you.'

And I made it clear that Bretford had made that VERY clear. Besides, I said, a piece of property like the Elm Street Place is, just on its own, perfectly clear.

Mr Klopstock, I thought, needed a special performance. 'Really the house!' I said. 'You don't expect to find a house like that anyhere ever. It's a house apart, alone, incomparable! I hope you will see your "way" as you said you would? Why don't you let me sign something? Something that I may be sure I'll be favored with this purchase? I don't want anybody to buy it. I will do anything to keep anybody else from making this buy. Let me sign something to the effect that nobody will buy it.'

To myself, I thought that it would have been droll indeed if Klopstock, presuming me naive, had advanced one of his 'priority' papers. He was at the disadvantage. He rathered to wait until he had called The Mackeys. He would not seem to

be selling the same house twice.

Hands in pockets, extricable from the desk from which I had become convinced he was not extricable, Mr Klopstock came around and leaned back against the desk's edge, being very impressive, that is had there been anybody around impressionable.

'I'm going to be frank with you,' he said, while it occurred to me that being just Klopstock was enough. 'I wish to be certain, absolutely certain that you like the Elm Street Place, intend to buy it, and can pay cash.'

'Twelve thousand for your asking,' I said, 'that is if it costs as little as that?'

'Exactly,' said Mr Klopstock, with much glistening of eyes, 'exactly!'

(I knew, of course, from what The Mackeys had said, that the total price was eight thousand.)

'There are a few things,' said Mr Klopstock, 'a few things I would attend to before Escrow. Can you see me by four Tuesday?'

'I can see you before that,' I said (and I could see through him). 'By four Tuesday?' I said. 'Not before four? Four?'

'Four,' said Mr Klopstock.

Klopstock applied himself to the task of retrieving 'temporary' papers in the hands of The Mackeys. His 'benevolence', his sudden magnanimity, what semblance of these two qualities he could exhume out of the dusty devices of his office world, he bestowed on The Mackeys as he went about exchanging a 'payments by instalments' sale for a 'cash sale'.

He told The Mackeys he had been sorry about it; he had been broken up about it; he had felt how unfair business and life was and that he was really the helpless victim of both, even more that The Mackeys. Could they see him about four o'clock Monday? They would bring a lawyer, they said. Oh my, yes! Bring, by all means, a lawyer this time! Mr Klopstock said he would not have them come without one! All signatures, all receipts, all 'temporary priority' slips, fraud, and selling of rat-ridden, rotten, toiletless firetraps, all would be signed away. Perhaps they would care to look at another of Klopstock Realty's houses? What would Bretford say would be a good buy for those very good customers, The Mackeys?

Well, we won't go into what Bretford would say that would

be, since that would be just the usual Klopstock. We will say, instead, that by four Tuesday, Mr Klopstock may have waited for my arrival in what I can assume to have been violent excitement.

I will be centuries late.

PAVANE FOR A DEAD WAITRESS

fast;

apron, hair-net
and hands; waitress,

Miss! lady, lady:
Miss be nimble, Miss be quick

ice the water
and serve

this mister and this missus
Candlestick; they are boothed,

and they are like a flame,
still and blue and long;

they sip, eat lettuce-salad,
olives and butter their bread;

quick; the hands come;
spin, and the calves go;

fast; ruffles, rustles;
steaks for the Candlesticks,

ice their water, coffee, linen
served warm; lumps and cream;

tip; they go away; breathe;
deep; slow, slow, slow,

and flame and stink
of wax and roses and amen.

— Robert S. Sward

CATERPILLARS AND PANTHEISM: AN ATTEMPT AT RECONCILIATION

The caterpillar was a naked, tiny
tender thin-skinned penis,
and green, very green.

He lay sleeping and breathing,
youthfully, and then aroused,
strolled to a dim food-leaf corner
and recoiled with forty legs
and was webbed in the white spider's
. . . yes,
the triple bulb-bodied,
fate-toothed spider came gingerly,
softly-quick, floating on the air
and shadows of her womb-made web,
and the caterpillar screamed
and doubled-up and opened out
and writhed and struck a score
of leg leg leg leg leg leg punches,
and then took a maternal sting
and was eaten raw in the heat
of the web-thread kitchen:

The spider chewed in from a lateral side,
her dinner involved in the days
of her life,
and the spider smiled throughout
her teeth
and the caterpillar walked no more,
absorbed now again, gossamer
in the full-course love
and meal of life . . .

— Robert S. Sward

ALAS, POOR IO

Poor Io
didn't know the earth was deep.
Snatched from play,
the Mother, from sleep,
rose to search
for the thief.

He was not found
He had no name
He wasn't seen
On earth again.

Alas, poor Io.

In Egypt, many years ago,
a yellow moth was named for her.

— Mary Godfrey Donleavy

LITANY AT THE GRAVE OF A NECROMANCER

I have brought
at midnight
elf-stones and myrrh.
Candle, crystal,
and hazel-wand.

I have come to join
in reprimand;
Adonia, Agla,
and Cabon.

I have taken a cat,
black all over
and written the words
of a dream desired:

I have taken a stone
from the tortoises' brain:
A wonderful stone
to extinguish fire.

I have come to tell you
that here you must lie.
After the cat and
tortoise die.

After crystal and
myrrh have gone:
Adonia, Agla,
and Cabon.

— Mary Godfrey Donleavy

A LOVE LYRIC

Like the sky billowing free from winter branches
You have composure. You are slender as a water reed,
White as willow under the bark,
Winter-stained wet, and sweet
In your composure.

Wavelets stir the pale sand by the lake.
The sky grays into spring among the willows.
The cardinal sings.

The fresh opening
Of the weather, melting soil and eliciting
Green tidbits from a remembered feast,
Impelled by, impelling this new exposure,
Creates a need for composure, a need
To fight back the wild rose, rebuff the thorns,
To negate the cardinal.

You wait on the sand,
The air warms against your will,
And each plash among the reeds washes
At reed roots, at your own wishes.

The wind stirs the bird's feathers. The bird
Yields. The twig bearing the bird
Yields under the bird's weight.
And to the wind, to the fresh
Rendering of spring, will you yield?

Will you open to me, as the sky
Misty with noon, opens?
On the bank among the tulips will you
Acquire color as the tulips?
Will you open as the tulips?

Will you
Emerge from your enclosure, your heart
Beating windward like bird's wings? Will I
Enter the frightened down under the bird's wings?
Will I penetrate the soft barriers
Of your composure?

Listen. The cardinal whistles to us
From the gray tangle of the brush.
Water stirs the sand at your feet, and the water
Reeds faint against their shadows.

The reeds slender in their leaning. The willow
Is white under the bark.

The promising sky, warmed
Against its will, is released from winter,
And billows free from the branches.
When you meet me by the water, love, having
Opened beyond restraint you will be deep
In your composure.

— Don Silberger

SPIES

by Don Silberger

By late afternoon we tired of the new Graduate Center, the abstract murals, and the World Tree. The snow was melting. Our shoes sopped up slush. David swung himself into the stainless-steel branches of the World Tree. A policeman hollered, 'Hey *you*! You can't do that!' David slid back down. He looked about, smiling, and said, 'Let's go home.'

En route from the modernistic, efficiently-designed graduate dormitories was the Computational Laboratory — just as modernistic and efficiently designed.

'Let's go in and take a look,' I suggested.

'I want to go home. I'm cold.' Suppressing the laugh that pried at the corners of his mouth he let it leak out slowly through his eyes.

We stood staring at each other, shivering a little. 'Let's go in for five minutes.' David tilted his head to one side: a concession. We sloshed up the concrete steps. 'Or so,' he murmured drily.

There was a sign on the glass door: 'No Unauthorized Persons Admitted.'

'You don't suppose we might be unauthorized, do you?' I said. 'I mean, after all!'

'I believe in signs,' he said. '"No unauthorized persons admitted" means "No unauthorized persons admitted"! Are you aware, brother, that this sign was put up by the Yew-nited States Government?' He pulled open the door and stepped inside. 'Since we're admitted,' he said, 'we can't be unauthorised.' He sighed. 'Christ, it really feels great to be authorized.'

A few streamlined davenports, chairs, and magazine stands strove unsuccessfully to fill the emptiness of the room. One whole wall was a window, looking out on the snow of the graying afternoon. The other walls were pastel, and seemed to engulf what little light entered from outside. Cold, fluorescent tubes buzzed against the sound-proofed ceiling. The room smelled of cigarette smoke and plastic. Reflected snow hid the glass-doored corridor that led to the underground heart of the building. A long, glass wall sealed us off from the computor chamber. We could see men walking about behind the wall, looking at charts, fussing with the huge machine that stretched its polished,

complex bulk the length of the room.

The machine was a parallelopiped of steel and electron tubes, with rows and columns of switches, spools, dials, controls, moving spindles, blinking lights. It was a mechanical brain. It could tabulate in fifteen minutes a differential equation that years ago a lone mathematician might have had to spend a lifetime on. It helped to solve problems involved in making atom bombs, rockets to carry atom bombs, remote controls for the bomb-carrying rockets, and other such essentials. The men solemnly tinkering with the machine were scientists. We could see their lips move, but through the glass we couldn't hear them talking to one another.

After we had watched them awhile, David laughed. 'I'm wondering,' he said.

'What are you wondering?'

'I'm wondering why they haven't thrown us out yet,'

'Maybe we look authorized,' I said.

'No. We don't look authorized. We're clearly unauthorized.'

Beyond the glass wall the serious-faced men walked about peering at charts, turning dials, writing numbers, moving their lips intently at each other, fussing with the big machine. 'I bet this stuff is really essential to the war effort!'

'What's the war effort essential to?' David asked.

'Maybe that's why they don't want us unauthorized people hanging around. We might steal vital, top-secret information. We might hand it over to the Russians.'

'We might at that,' said David. He glanced at a magazine on the shiny magazine rack beside the door. He laughed. The magazine was LIFE. 'I think I'll take a look at that machine. You're not in a hurry, are you?'

'In a hurry? Me? With finals a whole week away?' We pushed past the glass door to the corridor, and to the secretary's office. Her door was ajar. She was typing inside, a pretty brunette, absorbed in her work.

'Ps-s-s-st! Ketchnikoff,' I whispered loudly, rolling up my coat collar and looking furtive.

'Da?' he said.

'Dis is it, tovaritch,' I whispered. The girl glanced at us between paragraphs. She had no time for undergraduate loafers. Her typewriter rattled on.

'Ketchnikoff,' I whispered ominously. 'You go on vit de plan. I stay here. If she makes trouble — Poof!' She glanced

up, and frowned. 'Remember,' I whispered after David, 'for de Cause!'

'Da.' He turned solemnly, and held up his fist. 'For de Cause.'

I stood in the doorway, hugging my coat about my face, and glaring at her from the corner of my eye.

'You want to see somebody?' she said.

'Nobody, tank you.'

'Well, what do you want?'

'Madame . . .' I assumed the air of a foreign ambassador. 'Vat do I vant?' I was suddenly embarrassed. She was waiting impatiently. 'I'd like to see the computor,' I said, dropping the accent.

'You have to have permission. Do you know anybody?'

'I know lots of people.' I tried a smile.

'I mean, do you know anybody who works here?' She did not smile.

'I know you . . . almost.'

'I'm afraid that won't be enough.' She started to type again. She was pretty. She was absorbed in her work, and distressingly uninterested in me. I retreated to the main room to wait for David. There he was behind the glass wall, inside the computor chamber. He looked out of place — a person from the snowy outdoors, with his scarf and his jacket, and his sports cap shading his lean, impish face.

Nobody appeared to notice him. He wandered up to the machine, and glanced amused over its jiggling and symmetric complexity. Then I saw his lips draw back in laughter. The scientists looked at him, disturbed.

One of them paused, sliderule in hand, to talk to him. He moved his lips a long time. Then David moved his lips a few seconds. Then the scientist for a long time, nodding and gesticulating. Then David for a few seconds. The man's brows contracted, and his face darkened. David looked carefully bewildered, blankly complacent, pleasantly acquiescent. Only his eyes betrayed him, squinted and wet with glee.

Finally the man pointed to the door leading out of the computation room. His head bobbed, his lips writhed about soundless words, and the veins on his temple bulged. He pointed and darted his finger at the door.

David pointed questioningly at the door.

The man nodded violently. Other scientists passing looked

at David in disapproval. The man made one last, violent gesture toward the door, before he walked off, shaking his head, to attend to other, important business. David ambled about the room, peering at this gadget and that, and finally reaching the door. There he waved, and his lips formed the words, 'So long!' When he opened the door, I heard for a moment the clatter, rattle, and buzz of the machine.

'Vell, Comrade,' he said, closing the door.

'Vell, Ketchnikoff,' I said before we left the building, 'did you get de vital documents?'

'Da!' he said. 'I get de documents!'

In this issue —

PHILIP BUTCHER is Assistant Professor of English at Morgan State College, Baltimore, Md. . . . HELEN COLLINS is founder and editor of *Free Lance* . . . HARLAND RISTAU, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has appeared in several magazines . . . GRACE HUNTER is Professor of English at Grinnell College. She writes that Carlson's poem is from a group of seven on Negro jazz musicians in his book entitled 'Black Motives' . . . E. W. NORTHNAGEL, a frequent contributor, who writes that he is '33, a Philadelphia expatriate living in the Southwest,' has appeared in various publications . . . ROBERT S. SWARD, who has appeared here before, is 'a Navy veteran (Korean), 23, Chicago-born-raised,' and plans to attend the University of Iowa with his wife for graduate work with the Writers' Workshop . . . MARY GODFREY DONLEAVEY is a frequent contributor from Philadelphia . . . DON SILBERGER is an editor of *Free Lance*, has appeared elsewhere, and has just completed a novel . . . R. P. A. indicates one of our editors in a lighter mood . . .

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RELIEF ON THE TEXAS VELDT

Like St Ursula the storm has delivered us
our faces agleam with her tears
we are hid in her skirts
while the sun, still a raging eye
his scorching undone, has rent
has rent her black shifts
looking for us.

But we are already touching the darkness,
the beauty of black
reaching into us,
sending draughts through our marrow
and opening our pores.
(our sense ask to be permitted to function)
and we hear a chirping of birds,
small but very preposterous,
and the boys come by on bicycles
red-eyed with swimming
and stick their arms up the Coca-Cola chutes.
a black cat lean and African-looking
comes loping along the veldt
dipping into each culvert
looking for water.

—J. L. A.

POEM

i must have been near Moulin Rouge,
wending ways through a dark quarter,
hugging the mossy, cobblestone wall,
trudging through the flickering spheres
the streetlamps made,
brushing the yellow frost
they cast on the green velvet cobbles,
when, shattering the inertia of the night,
the New Year's revelers came raucous
with overwinsomeness, horns for mouths,
some hatched at the neck;
blurred on into a stream,
but cast to the alley, too turvey to last,
a beautiful fragment of Persian rug,
its fine-haired wines and browns and golds
rich in the streetlamp's glow.
i was particularly aware that the rug was tight
and made her longbrown legs
swell at the thigh
which the inchwhite ruffles could almost disguise
but what really drew me
from aghast on the wall
was the flaming mass at her head.
the crowd had drowned her with Scotch
and her long hair had turned fiery red!
as i came closer i saw her mouth,
which was more like a flower,
with delicate white filaments,
(the shape of reversed eyelashes)
strands of erect flax,
all around it,
this was the symbol of her fundamental innocence
and projected such an aura of naivete
that i had to touch my lips to it,
but it was much softer than i thought
and began to quiver
(until i almost became a bear raping a bee hive)
and there was a vast trembling hum
and the tight rug vestment became *alive*
and hipsections (cut off at the thighs and navel)

began rising out of her
all covered with fine lustrous fur
in the rich colours of the rug:
maroon, black, dark-green,
and all kicking furiously.
i was trying to make my way through
this great issue of twisting forms
that was pressing me on all sides
to get back to her magical mouth
and ask her who she was,
but their higher and higher arcs
finally smashed the streetlamp;
there was a huge lurch,
as if someone had given
the tapestry into which we were woven
a long quick pull,
and golden wax came pouring out of the streetlamp
drowning and locking everything
in a cataleptic block of warm dullness.
then years came and quashed the block
between geologic layers
until i cleaved the chunk of chalk
and saw the scene
a lacework pattern of multi-colored roots.

—J. L. A.

POEM

you'll have to wait a second
because i'm busy
skin-diving you.
with a deep genital breath,
i pull myself down the kelp-rope of inhibition
to its roots in the primordial sea.
at first there are only the pryable gems,
the shy and clement abalone,
but i thresh the swirling sea grass
and the blue-mat parts
and embedded in the sea-cleft
is a pot-hole full of
flaming fat lobsters,
with their eye-antennae quivering.
and just then my genital lungs burst.
but then my lungs always burst.

—J. L. A.

POEM

The interminable day is over. The chirping, bellowing, howling, tooting, piping, blasting, stridulating, and other kinds of noise-making that a brass band is capable of, have ceased.

I lie down, and the bed grows arms, your arms, around me, and your electricity — wise and innocent, brown and indomitable — hums through my arms, whistles across all of my orifices, sends messages down the marrow of my bones, along the scratches on my back.

Your breasts are the buttocks of two doves.

Your arms are a garlic soup.

Your eyebrow between your thighs is raised at me,

and I do not shun the coil-springed mat of your lower mouth.

The rain is pouring outside my cell, and the soil swells to meet the water, and we all wish (inwardly) to run out into it, but we are too cultivated.''

So I sit here humming your song . . . watching the thunder-lilies pop on the lawn.

The american women are prudes and do not know themselves . . . (answer only if you like (we understand this) because it is enough that you should read this).

—J. L. A.

REALITY

The Classic piece of memory
I possess
O jumbled medley
Where mere fragments remain
Retreating into the haven
of relaxed moments
Relived — loved — and realized
Out of time . . . irrevocable
In time . . . to erase
Thought crude and irrelevant
To instill peace fulfillment
The final need is reality.
illusions boundless
Previews exclusive performance
(mere theatrics)
Enticing the vision of make-believe
to rout the real
images and things.
My folly has been indecision.
The antidote: reality, to counter
a pattern with love.
The final need is reality.

— Bud Martin

IF I COULD CHOOSE

If I could choose
from which seed I would turn flower
would I select the secret darkness of the grape?
To translate, dark skinned and ebullient,
exultation:
sweet yellow moments of sun, blue laughter of rain,
indelible midnight and sunset fire
to whisper in the glass?
Would I submit, under lustre of patience,
to a will no stronger than my brother's
gleaming from the vault of vineyard?

I might select the open smile of cotton
like cloud-fleece snagged on the bushes
and dusty as peace.
I might translate a factual truth
surrendering all color to become mature
holding no secrets in the easy way of the fair.

Destiny moves like the highway over the hill
dividing the beauty of vineyard and cotton field
the one more beautiful only by contrast to the other.
Destiny sweeps like the wind
and is not for dreaming.

— Bernice Ames

ON THE ISLAND OF SLEEP

Winnow in wheat wind
and turn my dreams on their other side
with weaving heads intermingled
and no strings whirring a hollow gong.

Edge me into a minor key
easy for plunging the pebbled stream
breathing clear rhythm in moon-wash
glistening a peace of sharp dream.

Reason my going with deep-weed longing
whirling the current of your nervous pulse
in refrain like the rain of your breathing:
echo me minor, murmur of water.

— Bernice Ames

GOOD ANGLING WEATHER

Into the core of cloud
grooves a pier's long queue
stubbled with fishermen
their heads taken by mist
their boots on fact of cement.

Soft and wet as the mood of tears
frayed edges of light fuse into vapor
losing human detail;
they flirt with oblivion.

From a world in focus
the booted men move
into a world of become
hopefully lost and pinched from light.

— Bernice Ames

EXCERPT FROM LETTER

(*Mr Pantagruel Kinsey to his son*)

Such ruins, rubble razer, your stony slow
Rosette repels the onslaught of the flowers,
Graves cuneifahrt glyphic, Hieronymo,
Pale image, pikefruit, camouflage, your towers.

Your cloaca-abbatoir, witch totem,
Spines grisly deterrent . tin foil after all
Necklace sculled against the castle throat,
Mot juste thrust against the precise wall

Deploy, Hieronymo, the squeamish joy,
My beamish lad, of the pincushion hieronymos,
Such pinheads diaper a tomish boy
Ingenital withershin — rose on rose

— Walter H. Kerr

NO DIFFERENCE NOW

Flying slant-eyed purplewise the old men
then slowly and with infinite grace and
creaky joints bowed three times in the
general direction and set off on three
different journeys whose common catenary
feathered the nest of a trio of rogues
and a treeful of swallows and the purple
faded into a white mist and the ship
loomed through the fog like a hand of
glory ghostmanned and the captain spread
eagled on the quarterdeck and the mate
poisoned in the galley and the crew aft
out of their minds as well

The stars hadn't prepared us for this
Even Algol had been sleeping and the sleep
was purple and slightly wonderful after all

— Walter H. Kerr

THE RIGHT TO STAND IN LINE

the right to stand in line is mine
(and have your tickets ready, please)
without this virtue, certain art,
i fear i should resemble god —

and this is where you draw the line,
and fall most eager to your knees
to pray that somewhere in my heart
a piece of me is not a fraud.

i fear that all i have has fled
(into the west) to stand in line
and watch with ape-like ardor, bread
be broken, downed with cups of wine —

you like to join the mockeries?
well, have your tickets ready, please.

— Carl Larsen

EATING SUBGUM WAR MEIN

'This is a distasteful world,' thought he,
Eating subgum war mein with a spoon.
'Time lacks a meeting with man, and
(The noodles are long, needing twirling
On a fork, in the spoon) man is at best
All alone. This is a new, existential
Age (the subgum is the fine meat, rubbed
In garlic) in which nothing worthwhile remains;
Living is a poor loser's game. (The celery is
Crisp, and there are peppers; red in the green —)
Life is a colorless garden, with no Gardener,
And the demise of please is at hand.
Then why go on?' he wondered,
Eating subgum war mein, with a spoon.

AFFIRMATION

by Ann Sowards

SCENE I

This is the forest primeval, she said. Here is where we shall have our picnic.

They left the road and sat under the big tree. He watched her while she laid out their lunch. You have nice hair, he said. I should like to touch it. But he did not touch it then.

They ate soon. They watched the squirrels as they ate. When they had finished he lay back with his head on a root and watched the sky. The sky is nice, he said. I should like to float on a cloud with you.

Later they were on a narrow street with children and apartment buildings with stoops. I must leave you now, he said. It has been a nice day, she said. Goodbye. Goodbye. He walked away. She looked at him as he walked, then she opened her door and went inside.

She heard a trumpet. Then she heard a violin. She sat on the edge of the roof and looked above and below. The sky was dark. The stars were bright. Most of the windows were dark. She put her hand on her hair. You had best come in, the woman said. It's getting late. But she stayed longer with her eyes on the sky and her hand in her hair.

The next evening when she walked down the narrow street after her work he was sitting on her stoop. I was waiting for you, he said. Let us have supper. Let us go to a movie.

They sat with a candle between them. He held her hand. They did not talk but looked together into the flame. Later they sat together in the movies. He held her hand still. I like this movie, she said. The star is beautiful. The hero is handsome. They love each other.

Yes, he said. The movie is good.

They walked from the movies through many streets until they came to the cool grass of the bank of the river. The moon was just above them. The air grew damp before the boy moved. I have a job, he said. I have a room. There is enough for two.

Yes, she said. Yes.

Scene II

The room was small and dark and cold. She held her baby on her lap and it cried. My baby is cold, she said. My baby is hungry. You have no job. We have no food. My baby will die.

He walked to the door. I am going out for a walk, he said. I will come back soon.

He walked up the narrow street in snow. He walked to the cold bank of the river. The clouds were over the moon. I must have money, he said. I must have a job. I must have money and a job for my wife and baby. He listened to the night, then he walked back from the cold bank of the river.

I shall get a new job, he said. It will be a good job. We will move to another place. Your baby will not die.

I will buy a new dress, she said. We will buy food. I shall soon have another baby.

Scene III

He was ill. He might never get well again. The children stood and looked at him and he closed his eyes. He would not talk. He would not look. I am going out, she said to the girl. I am going out for a little while. You will take care of him while I am gone. You will take care of the others. You are a good girl.

She walked up the narrow street and up the steps and into the stone church. She stood and looked at the candles burning against the black walls. I must have help, she said. He must have help. He must get well again. He must live with us. I love him. He must live. She stood for a while longer and looked at the flames.

She turned and left the stone church and walked down the narrow street and entered into her home. He will get well, she said to the girl. She went to the bed and looked down at him. You will get well, she said. He opened his eyes and looked at her. I love you, she said. You will get well now.

Yes, he said.

Scene IV

This is the forest primeval, she said. And here is where we shall have our picnic.

They left the road and sat under the big tree. He watched her while she laid out their lunch. You have nice hair still, he said. I should like to touch it. But he did not touch it then.

He said, We are old. We shall die soon. I love you, though I am old and shall die soon.

Yes, she said. We are old. We shall soon die. But then let us walk to the river when our dinner is over and see the moon and the stars overhead in the sky.

Later he held her arm as they went slowly toward the cool grass on the bank of the river.

ABBEY

Roofs and walls knocked
flat by Henry or Cromwell,
and only a few pillars
left to show where nave
and transept met and monks
monotonously chanted.

Grass grows in aisles
and apses (as we thread
them for a fee) and stone
hedgerows delineate
refectory and cloisters.

(The usual notices restrain
defacing this dilapidated
government property.)

But it's difficult, even
with help of the guidebook
and the orderly junkpile
of fragments of columns,
buttresses, trefoils, bosses
(all that's escaped carting
off to corncribs and doorsills
or sinking under centuries
of soil) to resurrect
the house of God, monks
and men which flourished
here between road a hill,
tree-fringed, where crows
circle, cawing their loud
aloofness to men's piling
and unpiling of hewn stone.

— Barriss Mills

GROUNDHOG DAY

Like Hardy and his oxen
at Christmas Eve, we'd like
to credit the old folklore
of the groundhog and his shadow.

Scientific explanations be damned!
The weather still belongs to us
and the animals. These 'highs'
and 'lows', cold and warm fronts,
cyclones and anticyclones bear
no resemblance to the weather we
(and they) know and live in.

But those round, furry
creatures still speak to us
in language we understand.
We've seen their stiff, upright
sentinels, alertly scanning
the terrain, their clumsy
scurrying back to hide-holes.

We visualize their torpid
wintering in burrows, feeding
on their own fat, sleeping
out the bad season. We'd like
to believe they heed, this day,
stirrings of some internal alarm,
stretch their bodies out of round,
quicken the pulse to brief
energies, crawling upward
to sniff the chill air and blink
at sun and snow, and (like
any of us wakened early
by uneasiness of mind or false
calculation of the cycle
of bustle and repose) slip back
to winter's remnant of reprieve.

— Barriss Mills

AFTERNOON IN SAGE AND PINON FOREST

I went out in the afternoon to the sagebrush
beyond the town to where
the first green pinon tree stands, alone, but quickly joined
by the crowding green of the foothills pinon forest.
Beneath the heat of the glowing afternoon sun
the odor of sage rose up warmly . . . and rich,
a pungent fragrance, and the dry earth beneath the sage,
cobbled in crisp dry clods by the wash of the
last summer rain . . .
broke beneath my feet and the dry earth's design patterned
among the sage gave pleasure to the eye.
I came upon a flowering blue lupine
and yellow buds of cacti clustered in arid arroyos
where the roots of sage were washed and exposed
drying grey in the sun . . .
and where a small brown bird, furtive and shy, dry in color
as the earth, fluttered silently away . . .
until I reached the foothills forest of green pinon
soughing in the summer wind,
soughing and reflecting heat in tangy, needled odor . . .
and here I gathered a bag of small, dry pinon twigs,
dry and hard and golden within
where the sun's heat lay embedded,
the pitch embalmed in a redolent balm . . .
and plucked a branch of pinon, a stem of sage, and a cactus flower
yellow as the sun . . .
with long thorns protruding in starry clusters from the flesh
of its body.

— Wendell B. Anderson

MY GRANDFATHER WHO IS DEAD

My grandfather who is dead
Had ideas that scorned my and your
Humanity, and the twisted words for them,
Bitterly he regaled the passersby
With his tongue and hated many
Who brooked no peace by listening.

Amid his hates he loved : birds, baseball,
Dogs, beer, and me when I was young
And his in part. He taught me cards,
Laughing at conservative play as he
Flashed his cards like little lightnings
Or bemoaning the luck he pushed too far.

My grandfather who is dead
Believed in little and naively fought
To press himself upon a universe.
We parted at 62 and 17, and never
Came back again except as two lives
In wonderfully different worlds.

Yet this coarse man who hated and sunned
Himself in ignorance is of my life,
Of even my bigger world, and I loved
My grandfather who died calling
And wanting, and will not willingly forget.

— Harold Grutzmacher

SATURDAY NIGHT IN HAINESVILLE

Crop-talking denim men
wait at corners haloed
with electric moths, spit
(furtively) pat functional
ubiquitous bottoms
with five-thumbed eyes,
hell it in rooster talk,
discuss county politicians,
lawyers, sharp men in
sophisticated cuffs,
with contemptuous admiration,
and damn the damn potato brokers,
wait . . .

trying not to look eager
when old woman and kids come,
loaded with groceries and cinema,
asking to be taken
home.

— Alden A. Nowlan

THE SALVATION OF KELLY SLATER

by Robert J. Shea

They looked alike ; everyone who knew them remarked on that. The resemblance was striking as they stood in line, waiting for Kelly to pay the seventy-five cents admission to the dance. They might have been brother and sister.

They were both tall and both had pale, blond hair and blue eyes. Their faces, at this moment while they stood on line, not looking at each other, each absorbed in personal thoughts, wore similar worried, intent expressions, and had the same general short-nosed, square-jawed, Irish cast.

They were not brother and sister. When Kelly was among friends in whom he could confide, who would know he was trying to make something humorous out of something real, he would say that he and Ann were having an affair. He would not say that to anyone who didn't know him well, because they would not understand that he was not being pretentious, but was trying to lighten the matter by turning the truth into a parody of itself.

He bought the ticket admitting Ann and himself, and they went in.

'I'll be right back,' said Ann, and walked over to the girls' room.

The affair was called a tea-dance. St Thomas College, at which Kelly was a freshman, sponsored a tea-dance every Sunday afternoon during the school year, taking over the marble rotunda of the library and the Activities Room, where the campus clubs held their meetings, next door to it, for the purpose. Each week a different campus extra-curricular organization was required to supply ticket-sellers, ushers, and phonograph operators. One or two hundred students at St Thomas — which was an all-male college — some with dates, some stag, and about the same number of girls, college girls, high school girls, and working girls, came, generally by subway, from all over New York City, to these dances.

Today Rho Gamma fraternity was running the dance. That was one reason why Kelly had come. He wanted to pledge for Rho Gamma.

The other reason was that he was tired of spending money on Ann, and this was a cheap date.

Kelly had gone to confession the night before, and to communion this morning. His mother expected him to go to communion regularly, and if he didn't she'd start suspecting he had been committing mortal sins. But going to the sacraments bothered him, because the priests always insisted that he either marry Ann or stop seeing her, and, as a freshman in college, he was in no position to get married.

She came out of the girls' room and joined him.

'Let's dance,' he said.

They stepped into the crowded rotunda. It was difficult to dance gracefully with other couples bumping into you every few steps, but Kelly was only a mediocre dancer, and he preferred a crowded floor because he felt that it spared his dancing from the scrutiny of those watching from the sidelines.

'In a half-hour I have to meet some guys from the newspaper,' said Kelly. He was a freshman reporter for the campus weekly.

'Will you be long?' asked Ann.

'About an hour.' He smiled at her. 'It's a conspiracy. We're planning who's going to get the good jobs in June.'

'I don't see what you had to drag me up here for,' said Ann.

It was getting to be like that all the time. She was never satisfied with the way he arranged their dates.

'I'll be gone an hour, that's all,' he said. 'Then I'll be with you the rest of the afternoon and tonight.'

And the thought of being with her all that time was like a millstone around his neck. Ever since they had started going all the way together, the only moments with her that had not been boring or annoying were the moments they spent in the dark, in her house, or hidden behind bushes in a park. The rest of the time was spent waiting for that.

And trying to forget that, after they had gone all the way, he would go to hell if, by chance or God's design, he was killed before he got to confession.

They stopped dancing and went to stand on the side. Rho Gamma fraternity was distributing free cokes, and Kelly got one for Ann and one for himself.

'Have you gone to confession?' he asked her.

'No,' she said.

'You should go. It worries me.'

'You just want to wash your hands of being responsible for me.'

'That isn't the reason.' It was an argument they'd had dozens of times. Kelly found it hard to remember the time when he and Ann Doherty had just met, and he was going all-out to impress her. She was a very good-looking, intelligent girl, and he had been attracted to her immediately. He found ways to let her know how intelligent he was, the books he'd read, the music he listened to, the awards and scholarships he'd won when he graduated from high school.

Now that she let him do everything, though, there was no point in impressing her, and things dragged on, punctuated by the acts of what he jokingly called their affair and by arguments about confession.

'I'll go when I feel like it,' said Ann. 'I don't see how you can go running to confession every week and then go out with me and do it all over again. You're not really sorry.'

That was the one thing that bothered Kelly. You were supposed to have, he'd been taught, a firm purpose of amendment. He would have to resolve not to see Ann again to really fulfil that condition. What if he hadn't been getting absolution, if it was like a vaccination that didn't take, and he died and went to hell with a whole bunch of bad confessions and communions on his soul along with everything else?

He was old enough to know that a lot of people didn't believe in hell, for a lot of good reasons. But he couldn't convince himself that there was no hell. He was quite sure there was, and it sounded like the ultimate in disgrace and isolation and pain, and he didn't want to be condemned to it.

'I've got to go meet those guys now,' he said.

'Alright,' Ann said, shrugging.

The newspaper office was also in the library, upstairs three flights. The glass-panelled door was open, and he walked in.

There were two other freshmen there, Frank and Tom. They had planned this meeting to work out their future on the campus newspaper. Frank, like Kelly, wanted to pledge for Rho Gamma. Tom had declared himself an independent.

The three of them figured that by working together they could assure themselves of getting the best jobs on tthe paper when promotions took place in June. Each of them wanted to be editor eventually, and they had four rivals, other freshman reporters. The jobs of Assistant News Copy Editor, Assistant

Sports Copy Editor, and Assistant Feature Editor would be open. Kelly, Frank, and Tom agreed on which jobs they wanted and made vague plans to praise each other and damn their rivals in front of the men who would be doing the appointing. Then, after a long circular discussion of the political intricacies of the paper's organization, they got on the subject of fraternities.

Frank and Kelly said they hoped they would be asked to pledge.

'I don't think there should be any fraternities in a Catholic college,' said Tom. 'They sponsor beer parties. Everybody gets drunk and they have sex orgies.'

Kelly faintly hoped that was true, but Frank jumped to the attack. 'Where did you hear that?'

Tom raised an eyebrow. 'I hear stories.'

Frank said, 'I don't know about any other fraternities on this campus, but I know that's not true of Rho Gamma. Rho Gamma is the best fraternity at St Thomas. All the important men on the campus belong to it, and nobody gets anywhere on this campus if they don't lead good Catholic lives.'

Kelly suddenly felt a stab of worry. He wasn't leading a good Catholic life.

'Sounds like propaganda to me,' said Tom.

'Yeah?' said Frank. 'Well I happen to know practically every guy in Rho Gamma, and I know differently. They're all good, clean guys, and they have decent girl-friends. They have a saying in Rho Gamma that unless a guy is the kind of guy you can take home and be proud to introduce to your mother, he can't be a brother in Rho Gamma.'

Kelly didn't feel like joining in the conversation.

'How the hell can they tell anything about a guy, the kind of life he's leading?' demanded Tom.

'Because they check up on you, that's how,' said Frank. 'They have a million ways. They keep their ears open on campus. They have alumni members scattered all over the city. They decide they want to pledge a guy, they check up on him for months ahead of time. I know. I have friends in Rho Gamma. They start checking up on you before you even know they're considering you for pledging.'

The argument went on for a long time. Tom took the stand that organizations that restricted their membership were opposed to the spirit of the Catholic church. They batted that around for a while and got off the subject of immorality.

Finally Kelly said, 'My girl's waiting outside. I have to get back to her.'

He went back downstairs to the dance, and found Ann sitting in the Activities Room. They danced and sat alternately, and had some more of the free cokes, and Kelly spoke to several Rho Gamma brothers who were working on the dance committee. He didn't introduce Ann to them.

At seven o'clock, the dance ended.

In this issue —

J. L. A. is Joel Andrews, at present teaches harp and composes in Texas . . . BERNICE AMES in her first appearance in *Free Lance* writes from Los Angeles . . . BUD MARTIN is a member of the early Free Lance Workshop, and has appeared before . . . WALTER H. KERR has appeared elsewhere . . . CARL LARSEN writes from California and appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal* . . . ANN SOWARDS is a graduate student at Indiana University . . . BARRISS MILLS has appeared in *New Orleans Poetry Journal, Flame,* and has a new volume of poetry scheduled by Erewhon Press . . . WENDELL B. ANDERSON has appeared in *Yale Review, The Naked Ear,* and others, writes from Judson Crews' ranch in Taos . . . HAROLD GRUTZMACHER is a new writer from Chicago . . . ALDEN A. NOWLAN writes from New Brunswick and has appeared in the *Dalhousie Review* . . . ROBERT J. SHEA is a prolific new writer and submits from Rutgers University.